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through His Excellency Count Platen, F.R.G.S.; Meteorological Papers published by the Board of Trade, &c.

The Papers read were—

1. DR. LIVINGSTONE on *Lakes Nyinyesi, or Nyassa and Shirwa, in Eastern Africa.*

Communicated from the FOREIGN OFFICE by the RIGHT HON. LORD JOHN  
RUSSELL, F.R.G.S.

DR. LIVINGSTONE, in company with Mr. C. Livingstone, Dr. Kirk, and Mr. Rae, has traced the Shiré River up to its point of departure from Lake Nyinyesi or Nyassa, and found that there were only 33 miles of cataract to be passed. After this interruption the river became smooth again, and continued so right into the lake, in lat.  $14^{\circ} 25'$  S. The country adjacent to the Shiré is formed of three well-defined terraces. The first of these is the actual valley of the river, elevated from 1200 to 1500 feet above the level of the sea, and exactly like the valley of the Nile at Cairo. The second terrace lies east of this, and is upwards of 2000 feet in altitude, and 3 to 4 miles broad. The third terrace is, again, eastwards of this, and exceeds 3000 feet in altitude. It is bounded on the east by Lake Shirwa, and by a range of very lofty mountains. Based upon this last terrace is Mount Zomba, rising to an additional height of 7000 feet. Thus at a few miles' distance from each other very various climates exist. The second and third terraces were cool, and even cold, and largely supplied with running brooks.

The terraces are extensively cultivated with cotton, of foreign origin. No information could be obtained of the length of Lake Nyassa; that of Lake Shirwa is 90 miles. The two lakes are separated by a narrow isthmus. There was no appearance of the water of Lake Nyassa ever rising or falling much. The River Shiré does not vary more than 2 or 3 feet from the wet to the dry season. It issues from the lake in a stream of from 80 to 150 yards broad, 12 feet deep, and running at  $2\frac{1}{2}$  knots an hour.

All trade from the interior to the coast, lawful and unlawful, crosses the narrow isthmus that separates the two lakes, and it is there that Dr. Livingstone thinks slave exportation might most easily be checked. The natives were intelligent, and are great agriculturists: the worst feature about them was frequent drunkenness, from over-use of native beer and Indian hemp.

The CHAIRMAN ventured to say that the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs seldom received from consuls and diplomatists a clearer account of the physical geography of a region than was given in the few pages sent home by his friend Dr. Livingstone, and now communicated to us by Lord John Russell.

It appeared that the Shiré, a magnificent river in itself, was separated by cataracts (requiring a portage of about 30 miles) from the great river Zambesi, by which alone water communication with the sea can take place from the interior of the Continent. Dr. Livingstone has pointed out the healthfulness of this country, in which he and his friend Dr. Kirk slept so many nights without changing their wet clothes, and yet never had an illness. Dr. Livingstone had certainly realised the truth of what he said after he first went to Africa, that there were healthy lofty regions in that country in which Englishmen might live in perfect health.

In calling for any observations upon this tract of Africa, he could not sit down without adverting to another lake much to the northward of these two great lakes of Livingstone, the Shirwa and the Nyanzi, to that lake Ngami which was discovered by Captain Speke. When he told them that Captain Speke, who, a fortnight hence, would proceed on his adventurous journey, was present, as well as Mr. Petherick, our vice-consul at Khartum, who was likely to ascend from the upper sources of the Nile, and give a helping hand to his friend Captain Speke, in his endeavour to push to the northward to discover the real sources of that great river, he thought the meeting would like to hear something from both these gentlemen connected with the projected explorations of the interior of Africa, which would, he trusted, end in the discovery of the true sources of the Nile.

CAPTAIN SPEKE, F.R.G.S., said Dr. Livingstone's communication was most interesting, inasmuch as he had himself obtained considerable oral information of the same country of which the Doctor had now given them a positive account. He had first heard of the lake recently discovered by Dr. Livingstone only as the Nyassa or Lake when at Kilwa; now, however, the discoverer had given them its true specific name, in calling it Niyanyizi, meaning in the Negro language the Stars, and Dr. Livingstone would do well to call it Niyanyizi Nyassa, or the Lake of the Stars. It was a peculiar coincidence that the negroes should have two of the night luminaries, as Unyamuezi the Country of the Moon, and Niyanyizi the Lake of the Stars, to designate two great topographical features of their benighted land by; and it is also remarkable that, both being so close together, the latter had never been heard of, though the former, the Moon, had been well known for centuries.

The Captain said he entertained some doubts about the opinion expressed by Dr. Livingstone as to the means of check-mating the slave-trade by simply stopping their passage between the two lakes, as mentioned in his paper; for whilst at Kilwa he had been to some considerable trouble in collecting information regarding that subject, and was assured by many native traders that they crossed the lake in boats at various ferries along its shores, and the missionaries had also heard this story from the same sources. Still it was conjecture, and he hoped Livingstone would soon push farther up the lake and see how closely it approached to the Tanganyika Lake, which is about the same altitude as the Niyanyizi Lake (1800 feet), and would much enhance the value of the two discoveries, should it prove that any connection existed between them, and the more especially so as Dr. Livingstone described that country in such glowing terms, as capable of producing anything that grows in tropical climates, including even cotton.

But when talking of Africa as a cotton-producing country, and although giving credit to its having a productive soil, he (the Captain) did not wish it to be inferred that it would be of any immediate use to us, for at present there were no regular organised and established governments there, nor would there be any until slavery ceased. Slavery, he maintained, was the first and great cause of, and impediment to the development of the resources of the country. Fortunately for Africa and for England, he might also say, these discoveries of rich and fertile lands—mainly attributable to the indefatigable exertions of the Royal Geographical Society, who are now pressing their adventurous

members on that land—would eventually be the means of suppressing slavery ; for when explorers point out these sources of wealth, the merchant's cupidity becomes excited, and with it means are soon devised to satisfy the desire.

In reverting to the compliments paid him (Captain Speke) from the Chair, and the acknowledgments he received from the meeting, in their unanimous approbation of his appointment to the command of the Expedition, he said he was highly proud of the selection the Society had made of him, and trusted they would never repent having done so ; but the best security he could offer them was, in saying that his interests were identical with those of the Society, and that they might be sure he would do the best for them. It had been truly gratifying to see the warm support he had received from the Home and Indian Governments, who had really been very liberal in support of this Expedition to determine the source of the Nile, which he believed he had already discovered, and was now simply going to confirm the belief. He expected to have no difficulty whatever in travelling from Zanzibar by the country of the Moon, and up the west side of the Victoria Nyanza to Uganda (the kingdom of), beyond the Equator, to which place Arab caravans go ; but beyond that point he knew there would be difficulties, which are so great as to be insurmountable to all native merchants, and, as yet, no one had gone north beyond 2° north latitude ; such at least were their unanimous statements when he questioned them on the last journey. Since returning to Europe he had met Mr. Petherick, who, unknown to himself, and while he had been exploring close to the southward of the Equator, was also travelling amongst the tribes to the northward of it, and had brought back names such as he had heard of and inserted in his map, as Bari and Wangara, the latter probably meant for his Wanyoro. These tribes, he was informed by Mr. Petherick—quite in conformity with the Arabs' accounts of them—were so hostile to one another that they never mixed, and penetration amongst them would therefore be most difficult. He (Captain Speke) had consequently proposed to Mr. Petherick to make a combined advance simultaneously with him on those tribes which lie in a short compass of two or three degrees immediately to the northward of his lake, and due south of Gondokoro, the German Mission Station on the Nile ; Mr. Petherick to come towards Uganda from the north, while he went northward to the Nile, hugging any river he might find running out of the lake. Now as Mr. Petherick had readily assented to co-operate with him, and as so much hung upon the security or otherwise of the undertaking, he hoped that that gentleman would receive the same support from the Government which he had done. It was a matter of purely false economy to withhold any means, now that we have the Nile's head in a corner, for searching it out ; and he regretted excessively that the Expedition which was so judiciously proposed by Lord Elphinstone, and which should, starting from Mombas, have travelled north-westward, passing by the snowy Kenia, and made for the same point as themselves, have been allowed to drop for want of a little support at the critical time ; for the more expeditions are on foot at once the greater security there is in travel to all, by the diversion which they create in the minds of the people.

MR. CONSUL PETHERICK, F.R.G.S., said that he was most happy the Government had been so liberal towards the Expedition sent out by the Society under Captain Speke, and hoped his travels would be successful. Captain Speke had described the natives of South Africa as totally different from those with whom he was acquainted to the north of the Equator. It would appear that the natives to the south were better disposed towards strangers than those to the north, probably because the Arabs from the eastern coast, for centuries past, had been in the habit of penetrating these countries for the purposes of trade, and had established posts or trading places in the interior, thus had become known to the people as perfectly harmless. Now the tribes to the north of the Equator had known no such trade, and they were most hostile not only to

Europeans, but to men of their own colour, and there were even subdivisions of tribes which made war upon each other.

During his peregrinations, the necessity of having a large number of servants armed, who were thereby unqualified for carrying any of the provisions, or even necessities for themselves, naturally imposed upon him the duty of employing a still larger number of men to carry provisions for the party, and also the merchandise wherewith to purchase necessities in the interior.

This difficulty was further increased by the impatience of the tribes to obtain glass beads and other ornaments, for, instead of waiting to obtain them in the legitimate way of trade, they made frequent and sometimes rather awkward attempts to get possession of them in an illegitimate manner, and he had been frequently compelled to prove to them that powder and ball were more persuasive than bow and arrow, or lance and club. This being the case, he felt sure Captain Speke would have considerable difficulty in making his way through these tribes. There was something more than bravery required—a knowledge of the people, of their habits, and of their language, was essentially necessary; these Captain Speke unfortunately did not possess. Therefore, having these advantages himself, he believed that were he to meet him, he should be of considerable assistance in bringing him from the Equator to the Nile. And although he was engaged in trade, and had five or six establishments to look after, yet he would not allow his friend to remain in the lurch while it was in his power to assist him. He was also firmly persuaded that unless Captain Speke were met by himself, or by boats duly armed and provisioned, he would not be able to bring his party down the Nile, owing to the absence of food and conveyance. For only two months in the year did boats remain at Gondokoro, and unless he arrived within these two months, December and January, he would find no boats there to bring him down to Khartum. He would also find himself among the Bari, a most savage tribe, who would not give themselves the trouble to cultivate grain, and for the last five or six years had been so unable to sustain themselves, that they had been compelled to barter ivory for grain.

In assisting Captain Speke, the only thing he required of the Government was, that they should allow him sufficient money to enable him to place a couple of well-armed and provisioned boats at the service of Captain Speke, and to retain them at Gondokoro until his arrival. If these suggestions of his met with favourable consideration, he believed that then everything which human foresight could devise would have been attended to, and that they might hopefully and cheerfully look forward to the triumphant success of Captain Speke's expedition.

The CHAIRMAN said it was exceedingly desirable that Government should grant that additional power to Mr. Petherick which would enable him to lend real assistance to Captain Speke at the time of need, or rather permission to act as an exploring and roving Consul beyond the limits of Sudan should be granted to him. If this should be granted, and the Expeditions should be successful, then to British enterprise would be due the glory of having made a discovery which the Romans, in the plenitude of their power, failed in accomplishing.

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